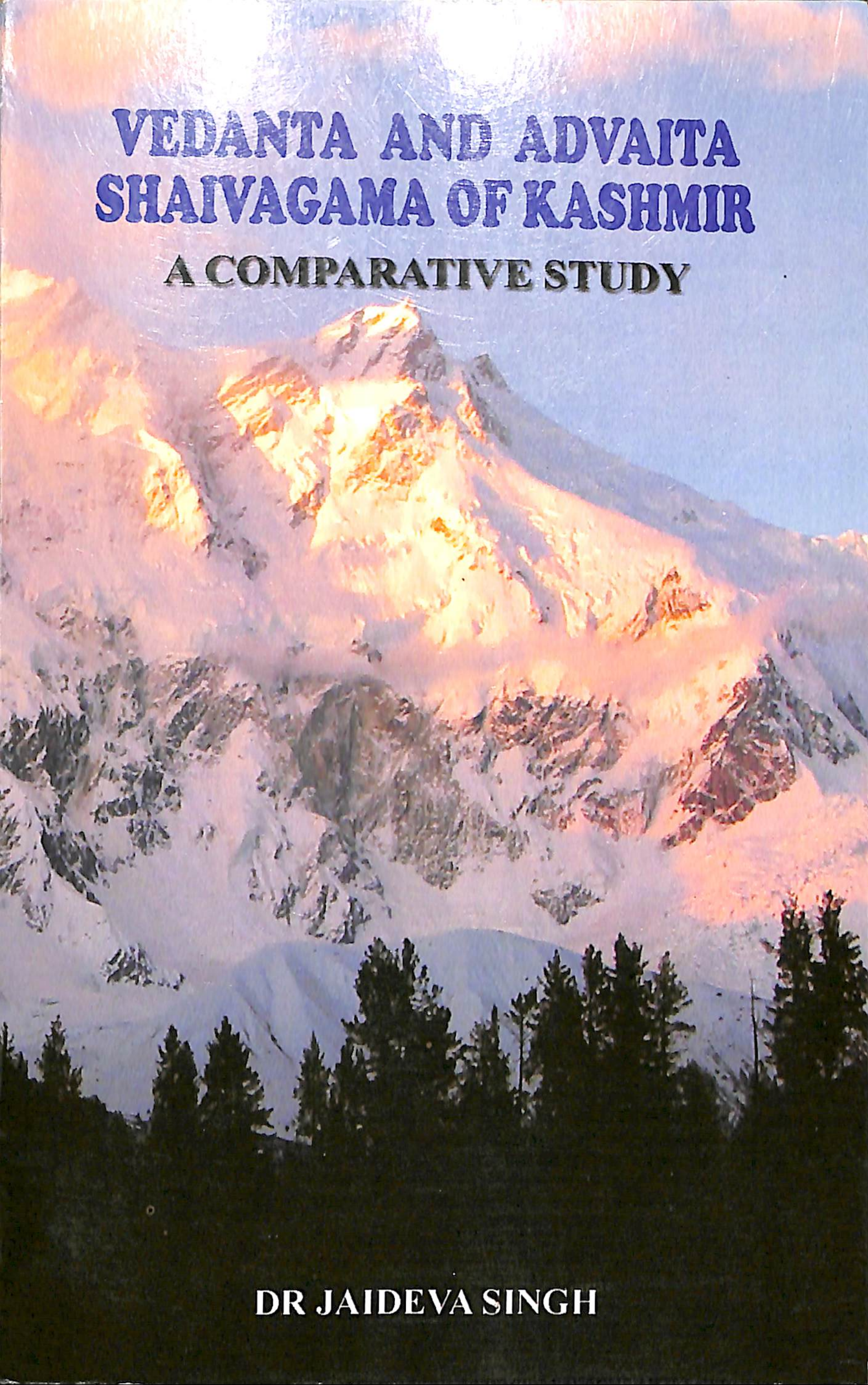
VEDANTA AND ADVAITA SHAIVAGAMA OF KASHMIR

A COMPARATIVE STUDY



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Vedanta and Advaita Shaivagama of Kashmir : A Comparative Study

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Published by

Swami Sarvabhutananda
Secretary
Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture
Kolkata-700 029

First Edition : 1985
Third Print : November 2010

ISBN : 978-81-87332-93-0

Price : Rupees twenty only

(*Text of Banka Bihari-Hemangini Pal memorial lectures, 1984*)

Printed at
Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture
Gol Park, Kolkata - 700 029

FOREWORD

Dr Jaideva Singh is a much respected name as an exponent of Indian philosophy and Indian music. His contributions in these fields are rich and varied. But, above all, he is a lovable person. A stranger may talk to him for hours without for a moment suspecting that he is talking to a great scholar. Simple and modest in his habits, kind and generous, he is a true representative of the old-time Indian scholars.

Sometime in December 1984, Dr Singh gave three Banka Bihari-Hemangini Pal memorial lectures at the Institute, one devoted to Vedanta in general and the other two devoted to the Para-Advaita Philosophy of Shaivagama in particular. These lectures were highly appreciated by the audiences. It was then felt that it would be a good idea to publish these lectures for the benefit of the larger public. Hence this booklet. Mr Jagadiswar Pal, son of the late Banka Bihari and Hemangini Pal, has paid for the printing of this booklet. He has also funded the memorial lectures which Dr Singh gave.

SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

Gol Park, Kolkata
20 August 1985

I

The Philosophy of Vedanta

An unfortunate fact about Vedanta is that it is generally considered to be synonymous with Shankara's philosophy. Advaita or Vedanta has come to mean the philosophy as propounded by Shankara.

The *Prasthana-traya,* viz, the Upanishads, the *Brahmasutra*s, and the *Gita*, have been interpreted by each *acharya* in the light of his own sectarian views. Each has tried to draw support from these sources for his own sect and has read into them thoughts of his own system.

Here we shall try to go to the original source and see what truth it yields to us. All have admitted that it is the Upanishads which constitute Vedanta. *Vedanto nama Upanishad* is the dictum that is respected by all. Even *Shariraka sutra*s are considered to be merely an adjunct.

So in the interpretation of the philosophy of Vedanta, we shall take our stand entirely on the Upanishads. The Upanishads are known as *Brahma-vidya*.

They expound only Brahman or *atman*. Three phases can be noticed in the Upanishads. The first phase is an attempt to discover the world-ground. The second phase is to discover the essence of the human being. The third phase is to discover the relation of the world to the world-ground and the relation of the essence of man to the world-ground.

The World-Ground : Many questions were posed by the thinkers of the Upanishads regarding the world-ground. Is *salila* or cosmic water the origin of the world or is it *akasha* or is it *vayu* or *tejas,* i.e. fire ? The intuitive discovery of the *rishi*s was that it is Brahman.

Then the question arose : 'What is the nature or *svarupa* of Brahman?' Another question was : 'What is the relation of the manifested universe to Brahman ?'

So far as the essence of human being was concerned, the intuitive discovery of the *rishi*s was 'that is *atman*'. In this connection again the natural question was : 'What is the relation of the *atman* to Brahman ?' So it is under four headings that we shall try to understand the philosophy of Vedanta, viz. (1) The *svarupa* or nature of Brahman, (2) The essence of the human being, (3) The relation of the essence of the human being to Brahman, (4) The relation of the world to Brahman.

(1) The *svarupa* of Brahman

(a) The Negative Approach :

There have been two approaches to the realization of the the nature of Brahman—one negative, the other positive. The negative approach maintains that the nature of Brahman is indeterminate. It is known as the *neti neti* approach. Brahman is 'not this, not that'. It is only in negative terms that we can speak about Brahman.

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* says :

Brahman is that 'wherefrom words turn back, together with the mind, not having attained (it)'. यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह । (2. 4)

The *Katha Upanishad* says : अन्यत्र भूताच्च भव्याच्च (1.2.14), 'I is apart from what has been, and what is to be'.

It is *nirvisesha*—not any particular, not qualified, *nirvikalpa,* indeterminate, *nirupadhi*, unconditioned, *niranjana,* without stain and indefinable, *nishkala,* without parts.

Since it is beyond speech and thought, it is transcendent. In the words of the *Mandukya Upanishad*, it is अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणमचिन्त्यमव्यपदेश्यम्— i.e. it is unseen, it is that with which there can be no dealing ; it is ungraspable ; it has no distinctive mark ; it

is unthinkable ; it cannot be designated ; it is *Advaita,* without a second (*Mandukya* 7).

Matter is not ultimate reality ; *prana* is not the ultimate reality ; neither *manas* nor *vijnana* is the ultimate reality.

By a negative approach, the Upanishads discovered that Reality is beyond the senses and thought. One can easily see that it is beyond the senses, but how is it beyond thought also ? There are two reasons for saying this. Firstly, thought or *vikalpa* that always sunders Reality into two—animal and not-animal, cap and not-cap, white and not-white, separates its object—animal, cap, white, etc. from the not-animal, not-cap, not-white, etc.—and affirms it. It is, by its very nature discursive, marked by analytical reasoning.

Secondly, thought is relational by nature, that is to say, thought has always a subject-object duality, nay, even triad, viz, knower, known, and knowledge. Reality is, however, unity of existence.

Thought, therefore, has to commit suicide in order to have an experience of Reality. Thought is mediate knowledge. There can be only an immediate experience—*aparokshanubhuti* of Reality. By spiritual praxis or *sadhana,* the *rishi*s of the Upanishads became integrated to *turiya,* the met-empirical Reality. Thus they

developed *prajna* in its highest sense, and had an experience of *ananda* or bliss in which knower, knowledge, and known become one.

As the *Katha Upanishad* says : अध्यात्मयोगाधिगमेन देवं मत्वा धीरो हर्षशोकौ जहाति (Katha, 1.2.12). By being united through the yoga pertaining to the Supreme Spirit, and having comprehended the Divine, one leaves joy and sorrow behind (and has the experience of bliss).

(b) *The Positive Approach* :

Having realized Brahman in immediate experience, the Upanishads also speak about Reality in positive terms.

The negative terms about Brahman in the Upanishads pertain generally to the *nirguna* or transcendental aspect and usually refer to Brahman in the neuter gender.

The positive terms refer to Brahman in the *saguna* aspect or in the aspect of manifestation where Brahman is treated as *deva* and is referred to usually in the masculine gender.

The three basic positive terms are *sat, chit, ananda*. They are not to be treated separately. They belong to the Divine simultaneously. These have to be described separately owing to the limitation of language.

The seers speak of Him in a double trilogy. Subjectively, He is *sat, chit, ananda*—existence,

consciousness, bliss. Objectively, He is *satyam, jnanam, anantam*—truth, knowledge, and infinity.

He is *sat* or existence par excellence, for He exists by Himself. He is *svayambhu,* the Self-existent one. All things owe their existence to Him. Space, time, causality are, to borrow a term from the German philosopher Kant, categories through which He manifests Himself as phenomena. एतस्मिन्नु खल्वक्षरे आकाश ओतञ्च प्रोतञ्च—It is in the Imperishable that vast expanse of ether and space is contained ; it is across Him that space is woven, warp and woof. (*Brihad* 3.8.11).

Time also owes its existence to Him.

एतस्य वा अक्षरस्य प्रशासने गार्गि निमेषा मुहूर्ता अहोरात्राण्यर्धमासा मासा ऋतवः संवत्सरा इति विधृतास्तिष्ठन्ति। (*Brihad*., 3. 8. 9.)

'Verily, Gargi, at the command of that Imperishable One, the moments, the hours, the days, the nights, the fortnights, the months, the seasons, and the years stand in their position.'

He is the Absolute Existence-Consciousness-Bliss. Consciousness and Bliss are not the attributes of Existence, but Its very nature. We have to use three words separately owing to the limitation of language. In reality, the Absolute existence is not simply existence but It is Existence-Consciousness-Bliss.

Objectively, Brahman is *Satyam*. *Satyam* is *sat* or existence viewed *objectively.* He exists by Himself. His

existence does not depend on anything outside Himself. Therefore, He is *Satyam*, Absolute Reality.

Jnanam is pure knowledge. *Jnanam* is consciousness viewed objectively. He is *Anantam*. *Anantam* is Bliss viewed objectively. It includes three ideas, viz, immortality, universality, freedom. Brahman is transcendent to time, and it therefore connotes immortality. He is transcendent to space and therefore connotes universality. He is transcendent to causality and therefore connotes freedom.

The *Mundaka Upanishad* gives an excellent description of *saguna* Brahman :

नित्यं विभुं सर्वगतं सुसूक्ष्मं तद् अव्ययं यद् भूतयोनिं परिपश्यन्ति धीराः (1.1.6.) 'The wise regard Him as eternal, all-pervading, omnipresent, exceedingly subtle, imperishable, the source of beings.'

These few quotations are enough to show the double aspect of Brahman, *nirguna* aspect about which we can speak only in negative terms ; which serves as the background of *saguna* Brahman, and the *saguna* Brahman, the dynamic, creative Brahman known as *Sachchidananda*.

(2) The Essence of the Human Being

This has been considered firstly from the analytical point of view, from the point of view of the *kosha*s, viz.

annamaya kosha, pranamaya kosha, manomaya kosha, vijnanamaya kosha, and *anandamaya kosha.*

The *annamaya kosha* is the bodily organism ; the *pranamaya kosha* is the vital vehicle, the *manomaya kosha,* the *vijnanamaya kosha* and the *anandamaya kosha* are the psychic vehicles. These are vehicles of the Self. They cannot be called the Self. The *manomaya kosha,* the *vijnanamaya kosha,* and the *anandamaya kosha* may at best constitute the psychological self or soul, but they cannot constitute the metaphysical Self, for they are all subject to change, whereas the metaphysical Self is, *ex-hypothesi,* beyond change.

How is the metaphysical Self or *atman* to be discovered ? This can be discovered only by examining the states of the self, viz. the waking state, the dream state, and the deep sleep state. In the waking state, the senses, both *jnanendriya*s, and *karmendriya*s are active. Among *jnanendriya*s is included the *manas* also.

In the dream state, the other *indriya*s become inactive, but *manas* is quite active, and it assumes the functions of the other *indriya*s or senses. In the dream state, it is not only the reproductive imagination that is at work, but also constructive imagination that is prominent. It fashions or fabricates all kinds of new and odd experiences.

In the third or deep sleep state called *susupti,* both *manas* and *indriya*s or senses become quiesdent and there is complete cessation of empirical consciousness. All objects disappear and even the contrast of the subject with the object is no longer there.

There is some sort of consciousness as is evident from the sense of personal identity connecting the states before and after sleep.

This state is free from all desire and is, therefore, one of unalloyed bliss.

In the *turiya* or fourth state reigns the *Sakshi-chaitanya* or witnessing consciousness which never ceases. Even in deep sleep state when the normal, empirical consciousness is completely obliterated, the *turiya* is present as consciousness which witnesses all the three states. This is the metaphysical Self or *atman* or the true Self of man. This is his essential nature par excellence.

(3) The Relation of the Essence of the Human Being to Brahman

The question that now arises is 'What is this *atman* ? What is its nature ? In what way is it related to Brahman, the metaphysical Reality ?'

It is obvious that there are two main questions connected with the concept of *atman*—viz. (1) What is

its essential nature ? (2) How is it related to Brahman ? We shall take up the first question—What is the essential nature of *atman* ? The first point in answer to this question is that *atman* is *caitanya* or pure consciousness, consciousness not depending on the senses, *prana, manas, buddhi,* or *ahamkara. Atman* illumines these, they do not illumine it.

The second point is that it is *nityodita.* It is ever-present *prakasha* or spiritual light. Even darkness is known through the light of *atman*.

The third point is that it is *sakshi* or witness to all that we do, feel, or think. It is the ratio essendi of the empirical self or our normal consciousness. It is the witness even to our deep sleep state.

The fourth point is that it is the eternal subject which can never be reduced to an object, the eternal knower that can never be reduced to the state of the known. It is the *drashta* of all *drishya,* the *jnata* of all *jneya,* the *pramata* of all *prameya.*

Therefore, it cannot be known as an object. विज्ञातारं अरे केन विजानीयात्—'By what can be the knower of all knowledge be known ?' When one tries to know him as an object, one finds, to one's utter chagrin, that even the attempt to know him as an object is not possible without his appearing as the knower. So the essential feature of

the metaphysical Self is that It is only *drashta,* never *drishya,* always *jnata*, never *jneya.*

We have seen that the so-called psychological self or empirical self is only a mind-body complex. It goes to sleep during *sushupti* or sound, dreamless sleep. Therefore, this is not our true self. Our true Self is the metaphysical Self which abides as a witnessing consciousness even in dreamless sleep.

As regards the relation of *atman* to Brahman, the *Mundaka Upanishad* says categorically that all beings come from Brahman :

यथा सुदीप्तात् पावकात् विस्फुलिंगाः सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते सरूपाः।

तथा अक्षराद् विविधाः सोम्य भावाः प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापियन्ति।। (2.1.1)

'As, from a well-blazing fire, sparks of like form issue forth by the thousands, even so, my friend, the *jiva*s are produced from the Imperishable and also go there.' The following quotation from the *Aitareya Upanishad* is even more pronounced :

स एतमेव सीमानं विदार्यैतया द्वारा प्रापद्यत। सैषा विदृतिर्नाम द्वाः (1.3.12)

'By cleaving asunder the suture of the skull, he entered by that door. This is the door, named the suture of the skull.'

So, *atman* is Brahman Himself . In fact, Brahman and Atma are synonymous in the Upanishads. This is clear from the four *mahavakya*s (great statements) of the Upanishads, viz. 1. सोऽहम्, 'That am I', 2. तत्त्वमसि,

'That thou art', 3. अयमात्मा ब्रह्म, 'This *atman* is Brahman', 4. अहं ब्रह्मास्मि, 'I am Brahman'.

It should be clearly borne in mind that *jiva* is not *atman*. Jiva is the psychological or empirical Self. *Atman* is the metempirical or metaphysical self. *Jiva* is *atman* reflected in or conditioned by *buddhi*. *Atman* is also called *Purusha*, not in the popular sense of a human being, but in hermeneutic sense, *'purau sete iti purushah'*, i.e. Brahman, who abides in the *pura* or city of the body. The human body is known as *Brahmapura*, the tabernacle of God.

Brahman is *chidakasha, atman* is *chinmatra, jiva* is *cidabhasa*. The destiny of the *jiva* is to become Brahman. As the *Prasna Upanishad* puts it : स यथेमा नद्यः स्यन्दमानाः समुद्रायणाः, समुद्रं प्राप्यास्तं गच्छन्ति, भिद्येते तासां नामरुपे, समुद्र इत्येवं प्रोच्यते-एवमेवास्य परिद्रष्टुरिमाः षोड़शकलाः पुरुषायणाः पुरुषं प्राप्यास्तं गच्छन्ति, भिद्येते चासां नामरुपे, पुरुष इत्येवं प्रोच्यते। स एषोहकलोहमृतो भवति। (6.5.)

"As the rivers that flow towards the ocean, having reached it, disappear ; their name and form are destroyed and they are designated the ocean, even so of this spectator, these sixteen parts (five organs of sense + five organs of action + *manas* + *tanmatras)* that tend towards the *Purusha*, on reaching the *Purusha*, disappear ; their name and form are destroyed and they are designated simply *Purusha*. That one continues partless and immortal"

The empirical self and the metaphysical Self dwell in the same body.

When the *jiva* recognizes the metaphysical Self, he is free from sorrow. As the *Mundaka Upanishad* puts it :

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वादु अत्ति, अनश्नन् अन्यो अभिचाकशीति।।(3.1.1)
समाने वृक्षे पुरुषो निमग्नः अनीशया शोचति मुह्यमानः।
जुष्टं यदा पश्यति अन्यमीशं अस्य महिमानं इति वीतशोकः।। (3.1.2)

"Two beautiful birds, fast bound companions, clasp close the same tree. Of those two, the one eats sweet fruit. The other looks on without eating. On the same tree, the *jiva* is sunken and deluded, grieves because of impotence. When he sees the other, the Lord, contented, and realizes His greatness, he is freed from sorrow."

The psychological self loses the sense of autonomy and lordship and is therefore prey to sorrow. When he recognizes the metaphysical Self who is always contented as his real Self, he becomes free from sorrow.

The question is how it is that Brahman entering the body becomes deluded and considers his psycho-physical condition as his real Self.

The answer is : It is due to *avidya,* due to the forgetfulness of his true Self. It is a limitation imposed by Brahman upon Himself. He becomes a voluntary exile in order to realize better the sweetness of home.

(4) The Relation of the World to Brahman.

The Upanishads declare categorically that Brahman is the origin and end of the world. As the *Chhandogya Upanishad* says : सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म, तज्जलान् (3.14.1). "All this is verily Brahman. Brahman is that from which everything proceeds, that in which everything breathes, Brahman is that in which everything is finally dissolved."

Taittiriya Upanishad says : यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते, येन जातानि जीवन्ति, यत्प्रयन्त्यभिसंविशन्ति। (3.1).

"From Brahman are all beings born, and having been born, it is through Him that they are alive, and He it is to Whom all beings return and in Whom they are ultimately dissolved."

Mandukya Upanishand says : एष योनिः सर्वस्य, प्रभवाप्ययौ हि भूतानाम्। (6)

"Brahman is the origin of all beings ; all beings proceed from Him and are dissolved in Him."

There appear to be three moments in manifestation. First of all there is *sisriksha,* the Will to manifest—एकोऽहं बहु स्याम्—May I be many! The second moment is the appearance of cosmic matter. The third moment is the entrance or immanence of Brahman in manifestation—तत् सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत्।

Finally, the Upanishads speak of realization of *Brahman* by means of Sadhana.

They emphasize *sraddha* or faith, purity or purgation, introversion and meditation. Two methods of meditation have been mainly recommended. The first is the meditation on *Om*. *Om* consisting of three phonemes, viz, a, u, m, and the *ardhamatra* after m are the true representative of Brahman who appears as gross manifestation in the form of *Virata,* as the primal manifestation in the *Isvara,* as the Absolute in the form of *Brahman.*

The other meditation is on the heart-centre. It is known as *Dahara-Vidya*, recommended by the *Chhandogya Upanishad* :

अथ यदिदं अस्मिन् ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म, दहरोऽस्मिन् अन्तराकाश: तस्मिन् यदन्त: तद् अन्वेष्टव्यम्, तद्वाव विजिज्ञासितव्यम्। (8.1.1)

"What is here in this city of Brahman is an abode, a small lotus-flower. Within that there is a small space. That should be searched out, that is what one should desire to understand."

This is a description not of the physical heart but of the mystic heart. One has to meditate on it. This leads to the transformation of the empirical mind into the Divine.

II

The Para Advaita Philosophy of Shaivagama

It is a religio-philosophical system which is elaborated mostly in the *Pratyabhijna* darshana.

Pratyabhijna is so called because the main emphasis in this philosophy is on the recognition of Self.

Shiva voluntarily adopts Self-veiling by His *tirodhana shakti* and becomes a *jiva*. The problem for the *jiva* is to recognize his Self as *Shiva*.

The *Pratyabhijna* philosophy first gives a description of ultimate Reality, shows how it descends to the level of the *jiva* or empirical individual and how the *jiva* can recognize himself as *Shiva* and become liberated.

The main principles of this philosophy may be described under the following heads :

1. Ultimate Reality

Most of the systems of Indian Philosophy recognize ultimate Reality as simply *prakasha,* as self-luminous Light or *svapraksha* which illumines everything in the

world. But Shaiva Philosophy maintains that *parasamvit* or, *Cit* or ultimate Reality is not simply *prakasha* ; it is *prakasha-vimarshamaya.* It is not simply spiritual Light but also creative Energy. *Vimarsha* is reviewing Energy of *Shiva*, His *kartrtva shakti.* It is like a mirror in which *Shiva* sees His glory, His creative power, His beauty.

So there are two aspects of it—*consciousness* and *activity. Vimarsha* is the *conscious activity* of the Self.

As Kshemaraja puts it in his 'Parapraveshika'—*Vimarsha* is *akirtrimaham iti visphuranam.* It is the non-relational, immediate awareness of I. *Vimarsha* is the Self-surveying of Self.

If ultimate Reality were simply *prakasha,* and not also *vimarsha,* it would be powerless and inert. In the words of Kshemaraja, *Yadì nirvimarshah syat, anishvaro jadashca prasajyeta.*

The awareness of *chit* as *chidrupini shakti* is *vimarsha.* Therefore *vimarsha* has been described by Kshemaraja as *para shakti, paravak, svatantrya, aisvarya, kartrtva, sphuratta, sara, hridaya, spanda.*

The all-inclusive Universal consciousness is also called *Anuttara,* the Highest Reality, the Absolute *Chit* or the Absolute Self ; the changeless principle of all changes. *Shiva* and *Shakti* are not different. It is the

same Absolute which from one point of view is *Shiva*, from another *Shakti*. From the point of view of *prakasha, Shiva* is *vishvottirna* or transcendent to the universe. From the point of view of *vimarsha* or *Shakti,* he is *vishvamaya* or immanent in the universe.

It is because of *svatantrya shakti,* His autonomy, that *Parama Shiva* appears both as experient and object of experience. This appearance or *abhasa* of *Parama Shiva* is not *parinama* or transfotmation, not *vikara* or change. It is simply the expression of His *svatantrya,* His unimpeded sovereignty.

Chaitanyam in this system does not mean simply consciousness. It means awareness of a *chetana* or conscious Reality that has the absolute freedom of knowledge and activity. It is *chaitanya* which is the nature of Reality.

Its essential nature is *chit* (consciousness) and *ananda* or bliss. It expresses itself in *iccha* or will, *jnana* or knowledge, and *kriya* or activity.

2. **Svatantryavada**

The Absolute in this system is known as *Chit* or *Parama Shiva* or *Mahesvara* or *Anuttara.*

It is called *Mahesvara* because of its absolute sovereignty of will—*svatantrata* or *svatantrya.*

Svatantrya is the *svabhava* or own-being of the Absolute. It is this sovereign Free Will that brings about the objectification of the ideation of the Absolute. It is free as it does not depend on anything else outside itself.

It is beyond space, time, causality, etc., for they owe their own existence to it :

चितिः प्रत्यवमशत्मि परावाक् स्वरसोदिता।
स्वातंत्र्यमेतन्मुस्व्यं तढेश्वर्य परमात्मनः।।

(*Iswara pratyabhijna-karika* I, pp. 203-4)

"The Divine Power is known as *chiti.* Its essence is Self-consciousness. It is known as *Para Vak*, the Supreme Word. It is by its own nature ever-present. It is *svatantrya,* the main power of the Supreme Self."

Para Vak, *Vimarsha*, *Aishvarya*, etc. are only synonyms of *svatantrya* :

सा स्फुरत्ता महासत्ता देशकालाविशेषिणो।
सैषा सारतया प्रोक्ता हृदयं परमेष्ठिनः।।

"*Chiti* or power of consciousness is the creative flash of light, the Highest Being, free from the determination of space and time. In brief, this free sovereign Will may be said to be the very heart of the Supreme."

Svatantrya connotes unimpeded activity of the Divine Will : स्वातंन्त्यं नाम यथेच्छं, तत्तेच्छाप्रसरस्य अनिवातः।

Svatantrya means being able to do according to one's will, the unrestrained expression of the Divine Will. *Svatantrya-vada* or the doctrine of the free expression of the Divine Will has been beautifully expressed by Abhinavagupta :

तस्मादनपह्नवनीयः प्रकाशविमर्शात्मा संवित्स्वभावः परमशिवो भगबान् स्वातंत्त्यादेव रुद्रादिस्थावरान्त-प्रमातृरुपतया नीलसुखादि-प्रमेयरुपतया च अनतिरक्ततयापि अतिरिक्ततया इव स्वरूपानाच्छदिकया संविद्रूपनान्तरीयकस्वातंत्त्यमहिम्ना प्रकाशत इति अयं स्वातंत्त्यवादः प्रोन्मीलितः।

"Therefore the Lord, *Parama Shiva* (the Absolute Reality), whose being is consciousness of the nature of *Prakasha* and *Vimarsha*, who, as the undeniable, ever-present Reality, appears as subject from *Rudra* down to immovable entities, as objects like blue, pleasure, etc., which appear as if separate, though in essence they are not separate, through the glorious might of *Svatantrya* (Free Will) which is inseparable from *Samvit* (universal consciousness) and which does not conceal in any way the nature of the Supreme. This is the exposition of *Svatantrya-vada* (the doctrine of Svatantrya)."

3. Abhasavada

From the point of view of the creativity of the Divine, this system is known as *svatantravada* ; from the point of view of manifestation, it is known as *abhasavada.*

In the Ultimate Reality, the entire objective world lies as an undifferentiated mass identically with the ideation of *Parama Shiva*, just as the varied plumage of the peacock with all its rich colour lies in an undifferentiated mass in the plasma of its egg.

This is known as the analogy of the plasma of the peacock's egg (*mayuranda-rasa-nyaya)* in Shaiva Philosophy.

The underlying principle of all manifestation is *cit* or the Universal Consciousness. The entire manifestation of subjects and objects together with the means of knowledge lies en masse in the consciousness of the Divine. Manifestation only means appearance of that reality as objects to the empirical subjects. Everything whether subject or object is an *abhasa* of the universal consciousness. The word *abhasa* is a component of two factors, *a* and *bhasa. A* means *ishat,* i.e. *sankocena* or 'in a limited way, and *bhasah* means *bhasanam* or *prakshana,* i.e. appearance. So *abhasa* means manifestation or appearance in a limited, polarized way.

Everything in existence is a configuration of *abhasas*. This system uses the analogy of a mirror to explain these *abhasas* :

दर्पणबिम्बे यद्वन् नगरग्रामादिचित्रमविभागि।
भाति विभागेनैव च परस्परं दर्पणादपि च।।
विमलतमपरमभैरबोधात् तद्वत् विभागगशून्यमपि।
अन्योन्यं च ततोऽपि च विभक्तमाभापि जगदेतत् ।।

Paramarthasara, 12-13.

"Just as in a clear mirror, varied images of city, village, etc. appear as different from one another and from the mirror, though they are non-different from the mirror, even so the world, though non-different from purest consciousness of *Parama Bhairava* (Shiva), appears as different both in respect of its varied objects and that universal consciousness. Just as reflection in a mirror is not something different from the mirror, but appears as different, even so *bahasas* are not different from *Shiva* and yet appear as different."

Two exceptions have, however, to be noted in this analogy. In the case of the mirror, there is an external object that is reflected, but in the case of *Maheshvara*, it is His own ideation that is reflected as the universe. In the case of the mirror, there is an external light owing to which reflection is possible, in the case of the Universal

consciousness, it is its own light that brings about the reflection.

Secondly, the mirror being non-conscious does not know the reflections within itself, but the Universal consciousness knows its own ideation.

Abhasas are simply the ideation of the Universal consciousness appearing as external to the empirical subjects. They are only external projections of the ideation of the Divine.

चिदात्मैव हि देवोऽन्तःस्थितमिच्छावशाद्बहिः।
योगीव निरूपादानमर्थजातं प्रकाशयेत्।

Iswarapratyabhijna-karika 5, 7

"The Divine being whose essence is *Chit* makes the collection of objects that are internally contained appear outside by His Will without any external material even as a Yogi (makes his mental object appear outside by his mere will)."

The Divine being does not create like a pot-maker shaping clay into pots. He simply manifests outside what is contained within Him. *Srishti* is derived from the root *sri* which means to let go to project.

Things which are identical with the Divine Being's knowledge or *jnana* appear by His Will as *jneya* or objects. Things which are identical with His Self or I appear as *this* or the universe.

It is the Universal consciousness itself that appears in the form of subjects and objects. Therefore, this appearance cannot be called false. This appearance, however, makes no difference to the fullness or perfection of the Universal Consciousness.

Svatantryavada of this philosophy stands in contradiction to *vivartavada,* and *abhasavada* to *parinamavada.*

4. **Shadadhva**

The activity of *para shakti* is described also from another point of view. It manifests initially as *para vak.* The whole universe consisting of subjective and objective order is a proliferation of *para vak* under six forms known as *sadadhva* which means six courses.

Three of them are under the *vacaka* aspect which means the subjective or *grahaka* aspect of manifestation, and the other three are under the *vacya* or the objective aspect.

At the level of *para vak, vacaka* and *vacya,* i.e. the word and the referent, are in an indistinguishable unity.

The first *adhva* or step of this differentiations is the polarity of *varna* and *kala.*

Varna, at this stage, does not mean letter, or colour, or class. *Varna* means the characteristic measure-index

of the function-form associated with the object. *Varna* is the function-form ; *kala* is the predicable.

This *adhva* is known as *para* or supreme or *abheda,* for at this stage, there is no difference between a *varna* and *kala.*

The next *adhva* or step in the creative descent is the polarity of *mantra* and *tattva.* This level of creativity is known as *parapara* or *bhedabheda* or *suksma. Mantra* is the basic formula of *tattva* ; *tattva* is the principle or source and origin of the subtle structural forms.

The third or final polarity is that of *pada* and *bhuvana.* This level of manifestation is known as *apara* or *bheda* or *sthula* (total difference between the *vachaka* and *vachya). Bhuvana* is the universe as it appears to apprehending centres. *Pada* is the actual formulation of that universe by mind-reaction and speech.

The *shadadhva* may be arranged in the following tabular form :

Vachaka	*Vachya or artha*
The subjective order	The objective order
or	or
The temporal order	The spatial order
or	or

The phonetic manifestation	The cosmogonic manifestation

1. The *para of abheda* level—*Kala*
   Varna
2. *Parapara* or *bhedabheda*—*Tattva*
   Mantra
3. *Apara* or *bheda* or *sthuta*—*Bhuvana Pada*

Varnadhva is the nature of *prama*. It is the resting place of *prameya* (object), *pramana* (means of knowledge). and *pramata* (experient).

Varna is of two kinds—non-*mayiya* and *mayiya,* i.e. metempircal and empirical. The *Vachaka-shakti* of non-*mayiya varnas* is inherent in the *mayiya varnas* even as power of burning is inherent in fire.

5. Manifestation of the World-process

Ultimate Reality is consciousness which has infinite powers and which contains in a potential form all that is likely to be.

It is the *svabhava* or nature of ultimate reality to manifest. If ultimate reality did not manifest, it would no longer be consciousness or self, but something like an object or not-self.

As Abhinavagupta puts it :

अस्थास्यदेकरूपेण वपुषा चेन्महेश्वरः।
महेश्वरत्वं संवित्त्वं तदत्यक्षद् घटादिवत्।।

"If the Highest Reality did not manifest infinite variety but remained cooped up within its solid singleness, it would be neither the Highest Power nor consciousness, but something like a jar."

Parama Shiva or *Anuttara* is *prakasha-vimarshamaya* or *Shiva-shakti.* The *vimarsha* is *Svatantrya* or *spanda-shakti,* a dynamic, creative power of *Shiva.* The *vimarsha* or *shakti* contains all that is to be.

यथा न्यग्रोधवीजस्थ: शक्तिरूपो महाद्रुमः।
तथा हृदयबीजस्थं विश्वमेतच्चराचरम्।।

Paratrishika, 24

"As the great banyan tree lies only in the form of *potency* in the seed, even so the entire universe with all the mobile and immobile beings lies as a potency in the heart of the supreme."

The *Shakti* of the supreme is called *chiti. Chiti* means the activity of cognizing. It is also known as *Para Shakti.* This expresses itself in the following main powers :

Chit : the power of self-revelation. In this aspect, the Supreme is known as *Shiva.*

Ananda : This means absolute bliss. In this aspect, the absolute is known as *Shakti.*

Chit and *ananda* are the very *svarupa* or nature of the Supreme.

Iccha : The will to do this or that. In this aspect the absolute is known as *sadashiva.*

Jnana or the power of knowing. In this aspect, He is known as *Isvara.*

Kriya : the power of assuming any and every form (*Sarvakara-yogitvam kriyashaktih*) : In this aspect, he is known as *Suddha-vidya.*

Manifestation may be considered under the following heads :

I. The *Tattvas* of Universal Experience :

(i) *Shiva-tattva* is the initial, creative movement of *Paramashiva*.

(ii) *Shakti-tattva* is the Energy of *Shiva Shakti* is the Principle of negation. She negates the 'this' or the objective side of experience.

In *chit,* the 'I' and 'this' are in an indistinguishable unity. *Shakti* polarizes consciousness into *aham* and *idam*—I and this. *Shakti*, however, is nothing separate from *Shiva*. She is His *aham vimarsha* or I-consciousness, His un-*mukhata* or intentness to create. As Maheshvarananda puts it beautifully in *Mahartha-manjari* :

स एव विश्वमेषितुं ज्ञातुं कर्तुं चोन्मुखं भवन्।
शक्तिस्वभावः कथितो हृदयत्रिकोणमधुमांसकोलोल्लासः।।

"He (i.e. *Shiva*, Himself full of joy enhanced by the honey of the three corners of his heart, viz. *Iccha*, *Jnana*, and *Kriya*, raising up His face to gaze at His own splendour is called Shakti."

Shakti is the active or kinetic aspect of consciousness. Just as an artist pours out his delight in a poem, picture, or song, even so the Supreme pours out His delight in manifestation. Kshemaraja gives expression to the same idea in the following words :

आनन्दोच्छलिता शक्तिः सृजत्यात्मानमात्मना—"*Shakti* thrown up by delight lets Herself go forth into manifestation."

In *Shakti-tattva*, *ananda* aspect of the Supreme is predominant. *Shiva* and *shakti-tattva* can never be disjoined.

Strictly speaking, *shiva-shakti-tattva* is not an emanation or *abhasa,* but the seed of all emanation.

(iii) *Sadashiva or Sadakhya Tattva* :

The Will to affirm the 'this' side of experience is known as *sadashiva* or *sadakhya-tattva.* In *sadashiva*, *Iccha* or Will is predominant.

The experience of this stage is 'I am this,' but the 'this' is only a hazy *(asphuta)* experience. The

predominant side is still 'I'. The ideal universe is experienced as an indistinct something in the depth of consciousness. The emphasis is on the 'I' side of experience. The 'this' or the universe is like a hazy idea of the picture that an artist has at the initial stage of his creation.

Sadashiva-tattva is the first *abhasa* or manifestation. Consciousness at this stage is perceptible to itself.

(iv) *Ishvara or Aishvarya Tattva* :

The next stage of Divine experience is that where 'Idam' or the 'this' side of the total experience becomes a little more defined (*sphuta*). This is known as *Ishvara-tattva.*

At this stage, the objective side of experience is a little more defined. Therefore, *Jnana-shakti* is predominant.

The experience of *Sadasiva* is, 'I am *this*'. The experience of Ishvara is '*This* am I'.

(v) *Sadvidya- or shuddhavidya Tattva* :

In the *Suddhavidya-tattva,* the 'I' and the 'this' side of experience are equally balanced like the two pans of an evenly held balance (*sama-dhrita-tulaputa-*

nyayena). At this stage, *Kriyashakti* is predominant. The 'I' and 'this' are recognized in this state with such equal clarity that while both 'I' and 'this' are still identified, they can be clearly distinguished in thought.

The experience of this stage may be called diversity in unity. In *Shiva-tattva*, there is the I-experience ; in *Sadashiva*, there is the I-this experience ; in *Ishvara-tattva*, there is this-I experience. In *Shuddhavidya*, there is equal emphasis on both.

Up to this stage, all experience is ideal, i.e. in the form of an idea. Hence, it is called the pure order, or *Suddha adhva,* i.e. a manifestation in which the *svarupa* or real nature of the Divine is not yet veiled.

II. The *Tattvas* of Individual Experience :

Maya and the five kanchukas

(vi) Now *Maya-tattva* begins its play. From this stage onwards, there is Ashuddhadhva or order in which the real nature of the Divine is concealed. All this happens because of Maya and her *kanukas. Maya* is derived from the root '*ma*' which means 'to measure out'. That which makes experience measurable, i.e. limited, and severs 'this' from 'I' and 'I' from 'this' and excludes things from one another is *Maya*.

Up to *shuddhavidya,* the experience was universal. The 'this' meant 'all-this'—the total universe. Under the

operation of *Maya* 'this' means merely different from everything else.

From now starts *sankocha* or limitation. Maya draws a veil over the self owing to which one forgets one's real nature, and thus *Maya* generates a sense of difference.

(vii-xi) The products of *Maya* are the five *kanchukas* or coverings. We may notice them briefly.

Kala—This reduces the *sarvakartritva* (universal authorship) of the universal consciousness and brings about limitation in respect of authorship or efficacy.

Vidya—This reduces the omniscience (*sarvajnatva*) of the universal consciousness and brings about limitation in respect of knowledge.

Raga—This reduces the all-satisfaction *(purnatva)* of the universal and brings about desire for this or that.

Kala—This reduces the eternity *(nityatva)* of the universal and brings about limitation in respect of time, i.e. division of past, present and future.

Niyati—This reduces the freedom and pervasiveness (*svatantrata* and *vyapakatva*) of the universal, and brings about limitation in respect of cause and effect.

It is interesting to note that Trika philosophy had anticipated the German philosopher, Kant, in the analysis of experience. Kant maintains that experience consists of synthetic judgements which are characterized by

necessity and universality. Necessity and universality are not products of experience. They are *a priori,* i.e. prior to experience. Senses provide only the data of experience, but understanding imposes its own laws on the data of experience to transform them into synthetic, harmonious whole of knowledge. Kant calls these laws categories. These are inherent in the very constitution of mind.

Kant maintains that all our experiences are determined by space and time. Trika philosophy also maintains that all our experiences are limited by *kala* and *niyati.*

The very word *Maya* means that power by which experience is measured in a particular way.

Kant's category of relation is included in *Niyati*. His categories of quantity, quality and modality come under the *kancuka-vidya. Kala* and *Raga* have no parallel in Kant's system.

III. The *Tattvas* of the Limited Individual :

(xii) *Purusha* : *Shiva* through *Mayashakti* which limits his power of knowledge and activity becomes *Purusha*. *Purusha* means every sentient being.

(xiii) *Prakriti* : While *Purusha* is the subjective manifes-tation of Shiva, *Prakriti* is the objective manifestation. *Prakriti* has three *gunas* or genetic constituents, viz. *sativa,* rajas, and *tamas.*

IV. The *Tattvas* of Mental Operation :

Buddhi, Ahamakra, and *Manas*

Prakriti differentiates into *antahkarana* (the psychic apparatus), *indriyas* (senses), *and bhutas* (matter).

Antahkarana means the psychic apparatus of the individual. It consists of the *tattvas—buddhi, aham-kara,* and *manas.*

(xiv) *Buddhi* is the ascertaining intelligence. The objects that are reflected in *buddhi* are of two kinds—(a) external, e.g. a jar which is perceived through the sense of sight, (b) internal—the images built out of the *samskaras* (the impressions left behind on the mind).

(xv) *Ahamkara.* This is the product of *buddhi.* It is the I-making principle and the power of self-appropriation.

(xvi) *Manas.* It is the product of *ahaṃkara.* It co-operates with the senses in building up perceptions, and by itself, it builds images and concepts.

V. The *Tattvas* of Sensible Experience :

(xvii-xxi) The five powers of sense-perception or *jnanendriyas* which are products of *ahamkara.*

(xxii-xxvi) The five *karmendriyas* or powers of action which are also products of *ahamkara.*

(xxvii-xxxi) The five *tanmatras* or primary elements of perception which are also products of *ahamkara.*

VI. The Tattvas of Materiality :

The five gross elements or the *panca mahabhutas* are the products of the five *tanmatras.*

The Individual Self *or Jiva*

Chaitanya or *Shiva* forms the very core of the being of each individual. It is the real Self.

The physical body of the individual consists of the *panca mahabhutas* or the five gross elements.

There is also *prana-shakti* working in him.

The *buddhi, ahamkara,* and *manas* with the five *tanmatras* constitute the *puryashtaka* or the subtle body of the individual.

In each individual, there is *kundalini* which is a form of *shakti* and lies in three and a half folds at the base of the spine.

Each individual has an experience of three states of consciousness, viz, waking, dream, and deep dreamless sleep.

There is, however, a fourth state of consciousness, known as *turiya.* It is pure *chidananda*—Consciousness—Bliss of which the individual is normally not aware.

6. Bondage

The bondage of the individual is due to innate ignorance or *anava mala*. It is the primary limiting condition which reduces the individual to an *anu* or limited creature. It comes about by the limitation of the *icchashakṭi* of the Supreme.

In association with *ashuddha adhva,* he becomes further limited by *mayiya* and *karma mala. Mayiya mala* is the limited condition brought about by *maya.* It is *bhinna vedya pratha* which brings about the consciousness of difference. This comes about by the limitation of *jnana-shakti* of the Supreme.

Aṇavamala leads to *Karmamala*, e.g. good or evil actions. This leads to *mayiya mala* which brings about the experience of pleasure, pain, birth, and death due to the *vasanas* or habit-energies of good and evil actions. It is the force of the *vasanas* that carries the *jivas* from one life to another.

7. Liberation

Liberation, according to the system, means *pratyabhijna* or recognition of one's true nature which means *akritrima-aham-vimarsha,* the original, pure I-consciousness. The pure I-consciousness is immediate,

non-relational awareness. To be integrated to the divine I is liberation.

As Abhinavagupta puts it :

मोक्षो हि नाम नैवान्यः स्वरूपप्रथनं हि तत्—*Tantra* I,p. 192.

"*Moksha* or liberation is nothing else but the awareness of one's true nature."

The highest attainment, however, is that of *Shiva*-consciousness in which the entire universe appears as I or *Shiva*.

Upayas :

It is not simply by intellectual understanding that one gains awareness of true I-consciousness.

There has to be *Shakti-pata*—the descent of Divine *Shakti* or *anugraha* or grace.

In order to earn grace, one has to undergo spiritual discipline. This is known as *upaya* or *yoga*. The *upayas* are divided under four heads, viz.(I) *Anupaya*, (II) *Shambhavopaya*, (III) *Shaktopaya*, and (IV) *Anavopaya*.

I. *Anupaya*

The prefix as in *anupaya* means 'slight'. When, through extreme *shaktipata,* the aspirant realizes the Self and gets absorbed in the divine consciousness

without any particular effort simply by once hearing a word from the *guru*, one is said to have attained Self-realization through *anupaya.*

II. *Shambhavopaya*

This is also known as *icchopaya*, *abhedopaya*, *avikalpaka* or *nirvikalpa yoga*.

It is called *icchopaya,* because it comes about by a mere 'orientation of the Will. It is called *abhedopaya,* because it brings about a complete identification of 'I' and 'Shiva'. It is called *nirvikalpa upaya*, for the mystic experience of the union of *jiva* and *Shiva* occurs when there is complete cessation of all thought-constructs.

Shambhava yoga is that (1) in which there is a sudden flash of the I-consciousness of *Shiva* (2) in which all ideation ceases completely (3) which occurs to those whose entire consciousness is in the inner *Bhairava* principle.

III. *Shaktopaya*

In Sampbhava upaya, one has to resort to *Shambhu* as *prakasha* That is why it is called *Shambhavopàya.*

In *Shaktopaya,* one has to resort to *chit-shakti* or *vimarsha-shakti* for realization. Therefore, this is called *Shaktopaya. Shaktopaya* is also known as *jnanopaya,*

bhavanopaya, mantropaya. Shaktopaya consists mostly in *Mantra-shakti, Sattarka, Bhavana,* and *Suddha-vidya.*

Mantra-shakti

Since *vikalpa* or thought-construct is the very nature of mind, it cannot become completely *vikalpa-free.* Therefore, the best way is to catch hold of one *shuddha vikalpa,* viz. 'I am *Shiva*, and ruminate over it through *mantra.*

What is *mantra* ? *Mantra* is not simply a conglomeration of letters recorded in a book. It is, really speaking, awareness at a higher level of mind of the veiled *atmashakti,* the energy of the *met-empirical I-consciousness* which is divine.

As Kshemaraja puts it in his commentary on the first shutra of the second section of *Shiva-shutras* :

मन्त्रदेवताविमर्शपरत्वेन प्राप्ततत्सामरस्यं आराधकचित्तमेव मंन्त्रः, न तु विचित्रवर्णसंघट्टतामात्रम्।

"The mind of the devotee intent on intensive awareness of the deity inherent in the *mantra* acquires identity with that deity and thus becomes that itself."

स च एवंरूपः समस्तेभ्यः परिच्छिन्नस्वभावेभ्यः शिवान्तेभ्यः तत्वेभ्यो यत् उत्तीर्णम अपरिच्छिन्नसंविन्मात्तरूपं तदेव च परमार्थः तदेव चाहम्। अतो विश्वोत्तीर्ना विश्वात्मा च अहम् इति।

"That which is unlimited consciousness transcending all limited expressions of Reality from the earth right up to *shiva category*, that alone is the highest Reality ; that am I. Therefore, I am both transcendent to and immanent in the universe."

The practice of this *Shuddha vikalpa* is *shaktopaya. Shakti* assumes the form of *mantra.* Since I-consciousness is the *shakti* of *Shiva*, pondering over that *Shakti* is *shaktopaya* which brings about the absorption of the individual Self in the Divine Self of *Shiva*.

Sat-tarka

About *sat-tarka,* Abhinavagupta says in *Tantrasara* (p. 23) तथाविधविकल्पप्रबन्ध एव सत्तर्क इति उक्तः— i.e. "*Sat-tarka* is the reflection that re-inforces continuity of ideas similar to the *suddha vikalpa.*" *Sat-tarka* leads to *bhavana. Bhavana* is creative contemplation.

Bhavana.

Abhinavagupta defines *bhavana* in the following words :

अस्फुटत्त्वात् भूतमिव अर्थम् अभूतमिव स्फुटत्वापादनेन भाव्यते यथा।

"Bhavana is that contemplation which enforces clarity of a thing which though real and existent appeared

as non-existent and unreal previously owing to obscurity." Constructive imagination plays an important role in *bhavana.*

Shuddha-Vidya

Bhavana leads to *Shuddha-vidya*. This makes manifest the light of supreme I-consciousness. With the appearance of *shuddhavidya, jnana* or object of knowledge appears as a form of *jnana* (knowledge). *Jnana* terminates in the *jnata* or the knower. Finally, this is displaced by the transcendental I-consciousness in which the distinction among the *jnata, jnana,* and *jneya* totally disappears.

IV. *Anavopaya*

For those who are not competent to practise *Shaktopaya*, there is *anavopaya*. *Anu* means the psychological self ; the mind-body complex. It is because this discipline starts from the mind-body complex that it is known as *anavopaya*. It is also called *kriyopaya* and *bhedopaya.* These *upayas* are not watertight compartments. Generally, one passes into the other.

Usually, the support of the *citta* of the individual practising *anavopaya* is either his (1) *buddhi,* (2) gross

prana, (3) subtle *prana* known as *varna,* (4) the body and the disposition of its organs in particular ways, known as *karana,* or (5) some external object known as *sthana-kalpana.*

Abhinavagupta has devoted three parts of his *Tantraloka* in describing all these practices. It is not possible to describe all these practices in a paper like this. We shall describe only *varnayoga* which is very important and which was practised by most of the aspirants in India.

Varnayoga is concerned with the *uccara* of the general *prana.* Abhinavagupta says :

उक्तो य एव उच्चारस्तत्र योऽसो स्फुरत् स्थित:।
अव्यक्तानुकृतिप्रायो ध्वनिर्वर्ण स कथ्यते।।

(*Tantraloka* 5. 131)

"From the *uccara* of this general *prana,* there vibrates an imperceptible, inarticulate sound which is known as *varna.*"

This goes on *naturally* and *continuously* in every living creature. *Svacchanda Tantra* says :

नास्योच्चारयिता कश्चिन्प्रतिहन्ता न विधते।
स्वयमुच्चरते देव: प्राणिनामुरसि स्थित:।।

"No one sounds it voluntarily, nor can any one prevent its being sounded. The deity abiding in the heart of living creatures sounds it himself."

Abhinavagupta says about it :

एको नादात्मको वर्णः सर्ववर्णाविभागवान्।
सोऽनस्तमितरूपत्वादनाहत इहोदितः।। (Tan. 6, 216)

"There is one *varna* which is *nada* in which lie all the *varnas* (letters) latently without distinction. As it is causeless, it is called *anahata,* i.e. unstruck, natural, uncaused."

By *anusandhana* or mental observation of the above process, *prana* and *apana* become equilibrated and then the dormant *kundalini* that lies in three and a half folds at the base of the spine rises upwards. At that time, a number of pleasant sounds are heard.

By dwelling on this *nada,* the *chitta* gets dissolved and then one can have the experience of *vishuddha chaitanya.*

The *kundalini* that rises passes through the various *chakras,* finally joins *sahasrara chakra.*

The *nada* is subtle in *madhyama* stage and finally when it reaches the *pashyanti* stage, it is no longer audible. The experient has now the experience of *jyotih* (light). All the *vikalpas* are calmed and one can have the experience of *purnahanta* or the supreme I-consciousness.

III

Comparison of Vedanta and Advaita Shaiva Philosophy

The Advaita Vedanta Philosophy is generally known as Shantabrahmavada or Kevaladvaita. The philosophy of Kashmir is known as Ishvaradvayavada or Pratyabhijna or Trika.

The Nature of Absolute Reality

1. The most salient difference between the two is that according to Vedanta, the absolute Reality is simply *Prakasha* or *Jnana,* whereas according to Ishvaradvayavada, it is *prakasha-vimarshamaya,* i.e. it has both *jnatritva* and *kartritva.* Shankara thinks that *kriya* or activity belongs only to *Jiva* or the empirical individual, and not to Brahman.

Shankara takes *kriya* in a very narrow sense. He takes it as synonymous with *karma.* Certainly, *parama shiva* does not act like a pot-maker moulding clay into pots. Shaivagama takes *kriya,* in a wide sense, in the sense of *chiti-shakti,* in the sense of *spanda,* throb or pulsation to manifest. Without activity, the Absolute would be simply inert, unable to bring about anything.

Shaṇkara says : "All activity belongs to *maya*." But is *Maya* simply a *Shakti* of Brahman or is it something quite external ? If *maya* is something quite external, then *advaita* cannot be maintained. If *maya* is *shakti* of Brahman, then surely, it is an *activity* of Brahman.

According to Shaivagama, *svatantrya* or autonomous Free Will is an important characteristic of *chaitanya.*

Kartritva is an important aspect of *svatantrya*. As Panini puts it : *Svatantrah karta,* a free being alone is an agent. *Svatantrya* of Shiva implies *kartritva.*

According to Shantabrahmavada, *Brahman* is entirely inactive. Activity belongs to *avidya.* When Brahman is associated with *avidya,* it becomes *Ishvara* who is endowed with the power to act. So the real activity belongs to *avidya.* The activity of *Isvara* ceases when He is dissociated from *avidya.* This is what Shankara says in his commentary on Brahmashutra : (2.1.14)

तदेवमविधात्मकोपाधिपरिच्छेदापेक्षमेवेश्वरस्येश्वरत्वं
सर्वज्ञत्वं सर्वशक्तिमत्वं च, न परमार्थतो
विधयापासर्व्वोपाधिस्वरूपे आत्मनीशित्रीशितव्य-
सर्वज्ञत्वादिव्यवहार उपपद्यते।

"Thus the potency of *Ishvara*, His omniscience and omnipotence are contingent upon the limitation caused by

the condition or association of *avidya* (primal ignorance). In the highest sense, when all conditions are removed by *vidya* (spiritual illumination) from the *atman*, the use of potency, omniscience, etc. would become inappropriate for it."

On the other hand, *jnatritva* and *kartriva* are, according to Ishvaradvayavada, the very nature of the supreme. Activity, according to this philosophy, is not an adjunct of *Ishvara*, but His specific nature. His activity is summed up in the five-fold act of manifestation (*srishti*), maintenance (*sthiti*), withdrawal (*samhara*), conceal-ment of the real nature *(vilaya*), and grace (*anugraha*). He performs these five acts eternally even when He assumes the form of an empirical ego (*jiva*).

Maheshvarananda says in his *Mahartha-manjari* that inactive Brahman is as good as unreal.

तथाहि परमेश्वरस्य अयमेवासाधारणस्वभावो
यत् सर्वदा सृष्ट्यादिपञ्चकारित्वम्।
एतदनङ्गीकाराद्रि मायावेदान्तादिनिर्णीतस्यात्मनः
स्वस्फुरणामोदमान्धलक्षणमसत्कल्पत्वमापतितम्।

(*Mahartha-manjari*, p. 52)

"This is the specific nature of *Parmeshvara* that He always performs the five-fold act of *srishti* etc. If this is not accepted, *atman* as defined by *Maya-Vedanta* etc., characterized by the want of the slightest trace of activity, would be as good as unreal."

According to Shankara, Brahman is entirely inactive ; all activity is due to *maya.* According to *Ishvara-dvayavada*, activity belongs to *Siva* or *Ishvara* ; *maya* derives its activity only from Him.

Secondly, *maya,* according to *Shantabrahmavada*, is *anirvacaniya* or indefinable, but according to *Ishvaradvayavada*, *maya* being the *shakti* of Shiva is perfectly real and brings about multiplicity or difference.

Shvetashvatara Upanishad equates *maya* with *prakriti* :

मायां तु प्रकृतिं विद्यान्मायिनं तु महेश्वरम्। (4.10)

The word *maya* is derived from the root 'ma' which means 'to measure'. *Maya* is that power of the Divine which measures out the phenomenon in definite forms. Maya is the creative power of the Divine. *Maya* is not a power of illusion.

The Status of the World

The world, according to Shankara, is *mithya* or false. It is simply an *adhyaropa* or *adhyasa* or false imposition on Brahman due to *ajnana* or nescience just as a snake is a false imposition on a rope.

In none of the Upanishads which form the original, real Vedanta, the analogy of *rajju-sarpa* or rope-snake illusion is to be found. Nor anywhere in the Upanishads

has the world been designated as *adhyaropa* or *adhyasa.* Shankara has borrowed it from Nagarjuna.

The problem for *advaita* is : 'How does the one Brahman become many'? Sri Aurobindo rightly says that Shankara cut the gordian knot by dismissing the world as illusory. Mahamahopadhyay Dr Gopinath Kaviraj says that according to *adhyasa,* Shankara's *advaita* becomes exclusive *advaita,* an advaita by excluding the world.

For Advaita Shaivagama, the world is an *abhasa,* but *abhasa* or appearance is real. The *abhasas* only prove the glory and richness of *Shiva*. The world lies only as a potency in *Shiva*, just as a banyan tree lies as potency or shakti in the seed. Manifestation only means making explicit what is implicit. Variety is not contradictory to unity. The Advaita Shaivagama maintains that *parinama-vada* and *vivartavada* are not the exhaustive theories of manifestation. Manifestation is brought about by the *Svatantrya* or the autonomy of *Shiva*.

The Role of Anugraha or Grace

According to *Shaivagama, anugraha* or grace is one of the eternal activities of Shiva.

The Upanishads which constitute the real Vedanta

also believe in anugraha. *Katha Upanishad* expressly says :

नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न बहुना श्रुतेन।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्य-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विवृणुते तनूं स्वाम्।। (1.2.23)

"This *atman* cannot be attained by instruction, not by intelligence, nor by learning. To him alone, It reveals Its subtle form whom It chooses."

This stanza plainly speaks of grace, but Shankara dismisses grace by a linguistic tour de force. He takes *esha* as standing for *sadhaka,* though it is a pronoun standing for the noun *atman,* mentioned in the stanza.

At another place, curiously enough, Shankara admits grace. Commenting on the following Brahmasutra -

पराभिध्यानात् तु तिरोहितम् ततोह्यस्य वन्धविपर्य्ययौ। (3.2.5),

Shankara says :

तत् पुनस्तिरोहितं सत्परमेश्वरं अभिध्यायतो यतमानस्य जन्तोः विधूत-ध्वान्तस्य तिमिरतिरस्कृता इव दृकशक्तिः औषधवीर्याद् ईश्वरप्रसादात् संसिद्धस्य कस्यचिद् एव आविर्मवति, न स्वभावत एव सर्व्वेषांजन्तूनाम्।

"Just as when the power of sight withdrawn owing to cataract is restored with the potency of medicine, even so only to some rare being whose spiritual darkness has been removed by the discipline of meditation, and who has attained fulfilment through the

grace of God is Realization restored. It does not come by itself."

The word '*Ishvaraprasada*' shows clearly that Shankara has admitted the grace of God in this context.

Atman in the Human Body

According to Shankara, *atman* in the human body is only *sakshi-chaitanya* or witnessing consciousness. Just as Brahman has no activity, even so, its reflection *atma* in the human body is *nishkriya*—without activity. According to *Ishvara-dvayavada*, however, *atman* in the human body also is *spandamaya.* It has always the characteristic of *jnaṇa* and *kriya.*

Difference in the Upayas

Shaivagama has four upayas, viz. (i) *anupaya,* (ii) *shambhavopaya,* (iii) *shaktopaya,* and (iv) *anavopaya.*

These have been explained in the previous section. According to Vedanta, *shravana*, *manana*, and *nididhyasana* are the only means to liberation. This partially represents *Shaktopaya* of Shaivagama. There is nothing like *shambhavopaya* or *annshavopaya* in Vedanta.

Difference in the Conception of Ajnana

According to Vedanta, *avidya* or *ajnana* is removed by *vidya* or *jnana,* and when this happens, there is *mukti* or liberation.

According to *Shaivagama,* there are two kinds of *ajnana,* viz. *bauddha ajnana* and *paurusha ajnana. Paurusha ajnana* is inherent in the *paurusha* ; *bauddha ajnana* is intellectual. By *vidya* only *bauddha ajnana* can be removed, *paurusha ajnana* will still remain. Such a person will only be landed in blank abstraction. He will not realize *shivatva* or divinization.

Paurusha ajnana has also to be removed. This can be removed by *Shakti-pata* which comes about either by *diksha* by a Self-realized *guru* or by direct divine grace.

Difference in the Conception of Mukti or Liberation

The ideal of *mukti* in Vedanta is *kaivalya* or isolation just as in Samkhya-yoga. The only difference is that in Samkhya-yoga, it is isolation from *prakrti,* in Vedanta, it is isolation from *maya.* The ideal of *mukti* in *Shaivagama* is *shivatva-yojana* or being integrated to *Shiva*.

According to Vedanta, the world is annulled in *mukti.* According to *Shaivagama,* the world appears to be a form of *Shiva*-consciousness in liberation.

All have admitted that it is the Upanishads which constitute Vedanta. In fact, Brahman and *atman* are synonymous in the Upanishads. This is clear from the four *mahavakyas* (great statements) of the Upanishads.... When the *jiva* recognizes the metaphysical self, he is freed from sorrows. Finally the Upanishads speak of realization of Brahman by means of *sadhana*.

The Para Advaita Philosophy of Shaivagama is a religio-philosophical system which is elaborated mostly in the *Pratyabhijna darshana*. *Pratyabhijna* is so called because the main emphasis in this philosophy is on the recognition of the Self. Shiva voluntarily adopts Self-veiling by His *tirodhana shakti* and becomes a *jiva*. The problem for the *jiva* is to recognize his Self as Shiva.

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Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture

Rs.20

ISBN : 978-81-87332-93-0

9788187332930